

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 22, 2006

His Excellency M. Nabil Fahmy
Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
3521 International Court, NW
Washington DC 20008

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

We are writing to express our disappointment upon learning of the December 16 Supreme Administrative Court of Egypt ruling against the Bahá'ís community. As you know, the court decision upholds the government policy which forces the Baha'ís either to lie about their religious beliefs or to be prevented from obtaining state identification cards. Without identification cards, Egyptian Baha'ís lose access to most citizenship rights, including education, financial services and medical care.

The Supreme Administrative Court ruling overturns a decision by a lower administrative court that Bahá'ís have the right to obtain government-issued identification documents which accurately state their religion. This decision was appealed by the government.

The Bahá'ís in Egypt do not ask for special treatment. They have offered to leave the religion space on the identification card blank, to make a dash, or to write "other." The government has denied each of these requests.

The Bahá'ís are Egyptian citizens. Egypt is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Egyptian Constitution stipulates religious freedom for all Egyptian citizens.

We urge the Egyptian government immediately—before the deadline of December 31, 2006—to take action to remedy this situation so that the Bahá'ís may be treated justly as Egyptian citizens. As the Chairman of the International Relations Committee and a member of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, we hope the issue of religious freedom for Bahá'ís in Egypt will not interfere with our important mutual priorities in the upcoming 110th Congress.

We look forward to your kind and prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Mark Steven Kirk
Member of Congress



Tom Lantos
Member of Congress